

Message Text

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TAGS: EG, IS, PINR

SUBJECT: INTSUM 354 - JULY 8, 1977

MOSCOW, KUWAIT, SANA FOR AMBASSADORS

LONDON FOR KINSOLVING

NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS

1. LEBANON. DESPITE THE DECREASE IN SHELLING IN
SOUTHERN LEBANON IN THE LAST SEVERAL DAYS, THE PRINCIPAL
PARTICIPANTS APPEAR TO BE INCREASINGLY WORRIED. THE
ISRAELI NEWSPAPER MAARIV REPORTED YESTERDAY THAT NEW
DEVELOPMENTS ALONG THE LEBANESE BORDER HAD CHANGED THE
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SITUATION. PALESTINIAN COMMANDOS WERE REPORTEDLY MOVING
INTO LEBANESE VILLAGES WHICH PREVIOUSLY WERE RELATIVELY
NEUTRAL. OF PARTICULAR CONCERN IS THE VILLAGE OF
NAQURAH, ON THE COAST THREE KILOMETERS NORTH OF THE
BORDER. ACCORDING TO THE NEWSPAPER, ISRAELI SOURCES
HAVE STRESSED THAT THE MOVEMENT OF PALESTINIANS TO THE
BORDER VILLAGES IS A SERIOUS THREAT TO ISRAEL. WE HAVE

EVIDENCE THAT MOST OF THE CIVILIANS HAVE LEFT NAQURAH,
BUT WE CANNOT CONFIRM THE PRESENCE OF PALESTINIAN

FORCES. PALESTINIAN ANXIETY OVER RECENT EVENTS IS UNDERLINED BY THE MEETING YESTERDAY OF THE PLO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AT WHICH ISRAELI AND RIGHTIST MILITARY ACTIVITY WAS THE PRIMARY TOPIC OF DISCUSSION. PROSPECTS FOR AN EFFECTIVE CEASEFIRE IN THE AREA ARE CURRENTLY VERY POOR. (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

2. WEST BANK. WEST BANK LEADERS, ALREADY CONCERNED OVER THE PRACTICAL IMPACT ON THEM OF LIKUD'S WEST BANK POLICY, HAVE NOTED WHAT THEY CONSIDER TO BE FURTHER SIGNS OF HARDENING ISRAELI ATTITUDE IN ADMINISTERING THE REGION. BETHLEHEM'S MAYOR FREIJ REPORTEDLY BELIEVES THAT ISRAELI MILITARY AUTHORITIES HAVE MOVED RECENTLY TO RESTRICT THE MAYOR'S POLITICAL ACTIVITIES.

3. THIS NEW POLICY, IN FREIJ'S VIEW, IS REFLECTED IN SEVERAL RECENT TRENDS:

(A) STRICT ATTENTION IS PAID TO ANY POLITICAL REMARKS MADE BY A MAYOR, AND "HARASSING INQUIRIES" FOLLOW.

(B) TRAVEL OF THE MAYORS HAS BEEN RESTRICTED BOTH ABROAD AND WITHIN THE WEST BANK, E.G. A DELEGATION FROM
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JERICO WAS RECENTLY PREVENTED FROM GOING TO ANOTHER TOWN TO SETTLE A FEUD.

(E) DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE CENTRAL MILITARY GOVERNMENT OFFICE HAS NOW BEEN DENIED TO THE MAYORS, FORCING THEM TO WORK THROUGH THE REGIONAL OFFICES WITH A RESULTANT SLOW-DOWN IN DOING BUSINESS.

(F) THE ISRAELIS HAVE SET TWO CONDITIONS FOR ALLOWING AID FROM ARAB "SISTER CITIES" INTO THE WEST BANK: ISRAELI PROJECT APPROVAL AND WRITTEN PERMISSION FROM JORDAN. THE LATTER CONDITION, FREIJ SAID, IS UNACCEPTABLE TO HIM AND THE OTHER MAYORS, PRESUMABLY BECAUSE MANY WEST BANK LEADERS RESENT BOTH JORDANIAN AND ISRAELI INTERFERENCE BUT CAN DO NOTHING ABOUT THE ISRAELIS.

4. THESE ACTIONS, ACCORDING TO FREIJ, DIMINISH THE MAYORS' POLITICAL STANDING BY UNDERCUTTING THEIR EFFECTIVENESS IN DEALING WITH THEIR CONSTITUENTS. IT HAS ALSO BEEN NOTED THAT THE ISRAELIS SEEM TO BE ATTEMPTING TO BOLSTER THE STOCK OF PRO-JORDANIAN WEST BANK NOTABLES.

JORDANIAN MINISTER OF INFORMATION ABU ODEH, A PALESTINIAN, MADE SIMILAR OBSERVATIONS IN A RECENT CONVERSATION WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS IN AMMAN. THESE APPROACHES ARE REGARDED MORE AS AN EFFORT TO CREATE SPLITS AMONG THE POPULATION OF THE WEST BANK. FREIJ ALSO MENTIONED THAT

THE PROPOSED WEST BANK STATEMENT ON THE PEACE PROCESS REFERRED TO EARLIER HAS BEEN SIGNED BY THE MAJORITY OF MAYORS. ITS RELEASE, HOWEVER, HAS BEEN HELD UP PENDING THE SIGNATURES OF A FEW MAYORS WHO DISAGREE WITH THE DOCUMENT'S PHRASING. IN OUR VIEW, THE DELAY MAY BE DUE TO A CASE OF COLD FEET ON THE PART OF SOME MAYORS, GIVEN THEIR PERCEPTION THAT THE ISRAELIS ARE BECOMING STRICTER REGARDING THEIR POLITICAL ACTIVITIES.

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5. SYRIA. SYRIAN NEWS MEDIA ARE CALLING A JULY 4 EXPLOSION NEAR SYRIAN AIR FORCE HEADQUARTERS AND THE AMERICAN SCHOOL IN DAMASCUS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF IRAQI CRIMES AGAINST THE SYRIAN PEOPLE. THE NUMBER OF CASUALTIES HAS NOT BEEN CONFIRMED, BUT AT LEAST ONE PERSON WAS KILLED AND APPARENTLY A NUMBER OF PASSERS BY WERE INJURED WHEN A CAR PARKED NEARBY EXPLODED. THE PRIMARY TARGET APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN THE SYRIAN AIR FORCE HEADQUARTERS OR PERSONNEL ASSOCIATED WITH IT, AND NOT THE AMERICAN SCHOOL OR AMERICAN NATIONALS.

6. A SOURCE OF THE US DEFENSE ATTACHE IN DAMASCUS REPORTED THE EXPLOSION WAS THE RESULT OF AN ASSASSINATION PLOT AGAINST CHIEF OF THE AIR FORCE GEN NAJI JAMIL, A SUNNI MUSLIM OFFICER WHO IS A STRONG SUPPORTER OF PRESIDENT ASAD AND THE CHIEF COORDINATOR OF SYRIAN SECURITY SERVICES. THE EXPLOSION WAS REPORTEDLY SUPPOSED TO COINCIDE WITH JAMIL'S ARRIVAL AT THE HEADQUARTERS; HOWEVER, IT OCCURRED PREMATURELY, KILLING ONE OF THE PLOTTERS WHO WAS IN THE PARKED CAR. JAMIL ARRIVED AT THE SCENE WITHIN MINUTES OF THE INCIDENT.

7. DESPITE CLAIMS THAT IRAQ WAS BEHIND THE EXPLOSION, IT WAS PROBABLY YET ANOTHER IN A SERIES OF INCIDENTS BY OPPONENTS OF THE ASAD GOVERNMENT. IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS, DAMASCUS ROUTINELY HAS BLAMED BAGHDAD FOR SUCH INCIDENTS.

8. THE SOVIET MILITARY'S NEWSPAPER RED STAR HAS REPORTED THAT SYRIAN DEFENSE MINISTER TALAS LEFT MOSCOW ON TUESDAY AFTER EIGHT DAYS OF NEGOTIATIONS THAT PRESUMABLY DEALT WITH THE QUESTION OF A NEW MILITARY ASSISTANCE AGREE-

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MENT. A SYRIAN MILITARY DELEGATION SPENT TWO WEEKS IN MOSCOW IN APRIL AND, FOLLOWING ITS RETURN TO DAMASCUS, THE SOVIETS RESUMED ARMS AND SPARE PARTS SHIPMENTS TO THE SYRIANS UNDER THE TERMS OF OLD CONTRACTS.

9. THE USSR AND SYRIA SIGNED AN ARMS AGREEMENT VALUED AT \$500 MILLION IN OCTOBER 1975. SINCE DELIVERIES UNDER THIS ACCORD ARE APPARENTLY NEAR COMPLETION, TALAS MAY BE RETURNING TO DAMASCUS WITH A NEW SOVIET COMMITMENT.

10. ASSESSING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SYRIAN MILITARY AND SOVIET ADVISORS, A SOURCE OF OUR DAMASCUS DEFENSE ATTACHE COMMENTED THAT SYRIAN OFFICERS STRONGLY DISLIKE THE SOVIETS WITH WHOM THEY DEAL AND CONSIDER THEM INFLEXIBLE, DOCTRINAIRE, AND INCOMPETENT. HARD FEELINGS BETWEEN THE SYRIANS AND SOVIETS HAVE BEEN INCREASED AS A RESULT OF A SYRIAN DEMAND THAT THE SOVIET MISSION VACATE ITS PRESENT HEADQUARTERS. ASSAD ALSO HAS INSTRUCTED THAT SOVIET ADVISORS NOT BE ALLOWED ANY AUTHORITY OR RESPONSIBILITY REGARDING SYRIA'S RELATIONS WITH UNDOF FORCES. (SECRET/NOFORN)

11. LIBYA. SUPPORT FOR QADHAFI WITHIN THE LIBYAN GOVERNMENT AND ARMED FORCES CONTINUES TO WANE, INCREASING THE LEVEL OF ANTI-REGIME PLOTTING, BUT COUNTERMEASURES TAKEN BY THE LIBYAN LEADER HAVE UNDERMINED THE LIKELIHOOD OF A SUCCESSFUL COUP. WHILE MISMANAGEMENT, POOR MORALE, AND OPPOSITION TO QADHAFI WITHIN THE OFFICER CORPS HAVE REDUCED THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MILITARY AS A FIGHTING FORCE, THEY DO NOT DIMINISH GREATLY QADHAFI'S CAPACITY OR PENCHANT FOR INTERNATIONAL TROUBLEMAKING.

12. THE GULF BETWEEN QADHAFI AND SENIOR MILITARY AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS CONTINUES TO GROW. THOUGH SEVERAL ALIENATED GROUPS WITHIN LIBYA ARE KNOWN TO B: CONSIDERING SECRET

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SOME FORM OF ACTION AGAINST QADHAFI, A SUCCESSFUL COUP WOULD REQUIRE A SIGNIFICANT DEGREE OF GOOD FORTUNE BECAUSE OF STRONG COUNTERMEASURES TAKEN RECENTLY BY QADHAFI.

13. ON THE OTHER HAND, LIBYAN OPPOSITION IS NO DOUBT ENCOURAGED BY THE CERTAINTY OF EGYPTIAN BACKING FOR ANY ATTEMPT TO TOPPLE QADHAFI. THEY COULD COUNT ON STRONG EGYPTIAN SUPPORT IN THE EVENT OF A SUCCESSFUL COUP, ASYLUM IN THE EVENT OF FAILURE, AND POSSIBLE DIRECT

INTERVENTION ON THEIR BEHALF BY THE EGYPTIAN MILITARY IF AN ATTEMPTED COUP WERE TO RESULT IN A STAND-OFF AGAINST PRO-QADHAFI FORCES.

14. QADHAFI'S INTERNAL PROBLEMS ARE UNLIKELY TO MAKE HIM ANY MORE RESPONSIVE TO US PROTESTS AGAINST HIS SUPPORT FOR MIDDLE EAST REJECTIONISTS AND SPONSORSHIP OF INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM. US HOSTILITY TOWARD ACTIVITIES WHICH

HE CONSIDERS CENTRAL TO HIS OBJECTIVES WILL HAVE LITTLE OR NO EFFECT ON HIS WILL OR ABILITY TO PURSUE HIS POLICIES.

15. QADHAFI IS CERTAIN THAT A GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE WILL FAIL. HIS RECENT APPEALS FOR ARAB SUMMITRY AND HARMONY ARE INTENDED TO BUILD RESPECTABILITY IN ARAB CIRCLES AND TO FACILITATE THE MAJORROLEHE EXPECTS TO PLAY WHEN THE ARAB STATES REALIZE THAT COMPROMISE WITH ISRAEL IS IMPOSSIBLE AND THAT THEY NEED LIBYA'S STOCKPILE OF MODERN WEAPONRY.

16. SIMILARLY, QADHAFI WILL CONTINUE TO CONSIDER TERRORISM AS A JUSTIFIABLEW EAPON OF STATE POWER, THOUGH HE MAY
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LOWER THE PROFILE OF THE ACTIVITIES HE SPONSORS OUT OF HIS CONCERN FOR LIBYA'S INTERNATIONAL IMAGE. HE MAY ALSO REFRAIN FROM CERTAIN OPERATIONS FOR TACTICAL REASONS.
(SECRET)

17. OAU. THE 14TH OAU SUMMIT HELD JULY 2-5 WAS DOMINATED BY THE MODERATES, WHO CLEARLY HAD THE UPPER HAND IN THE PRECEDING MINISTERIAL MEETING AND HELD THE BALANCE OF POWER AT THE SUMMIT. AMONG THE RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED WERE TWO COMPARATIVELY MILD ONES ON ARA,-ISRAELI MATTERS-- ONE ON PALESTINE AND THE OTHER ON THE MIDDLE EAST-- APPARENTLY WITH A MINIMUM OF DISCUSSIONS. THE RESOLUTIONS NEITHER CALL FOR ISRAEL'S EXCLUSION FROM THE UNGA NOR REFER DIRECTLY TO THE UNGA'S ZIONISM-AS-RACISM RESOLUTION.

18. ALTHOUGH THE FINAL TEXTS ARE NOT YET AVAILABLE, THE RESOLUTIONS REPORTEDLY:

(A) ASSERT THE RIGHT OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE TO ESTABLISH THEIR OWN INDEPENDENT STATE;

(B) STRONGLY CONDEMN THE "CLOSE ALLIANCE" BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE RACIST REGIMES OF SOUTH AFRICA AND RHODESIA;

(C) REITERATE SUPPORT FOR EGYPT, THE ARAB CONFRONATION STATES AND THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE IN THEIR "HEROIC STRUGGLE AGAINST ZIONISM AND RACISM;" AND

(D) CALL ON AFRICAN STATES TO BREAK ALL POLITICAL, DIPLOMATIC, ECONOMIC AND MILITARY TIES WITH ISRAEL.
(SECRET)

19. NOTE: INTSUM FOR JULY 7, 1977 WAS MISNUMBERED 352 SHOULD READ 353. VANCE

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